Missing soldiers of 1971 Indo-Pak war in Pak jails

†1723. SHRl SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large number of soldiers went missing during 1971 Indo-Pak war and evidences regarding their existence in Pakistan jails are surfacing; if so, the total number of such soldiers;

(b) whether it is a fact that the said soldiers are forced to live a hellish life in Pakistan;

(c) the efforts being made by Government for their release; and

(d) the assistance provided by Government to their dependents along with the scheme formulated for their future rehabilitation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY). (a) to (d) About 54 missing defence personnel of 1971 War are believed to be in the custody of Pakistan. Pakistan has however been consistently denying the presence of any such personnel in its custody. The Government has been pursuing this issue with Pakistan for a long time.

This issue was taken up with the Pakistan Government at various levels on a number of occasions. Recently, during the visit of External Affairs Minister to Islamabad in January, 2001, the matter was again raised with President of Pakistan and the latter in turn agreed to a visit by a small group of relatives of missing personnel to Pakistan.

Accordingly, a delegation of 14 relatives of missing defence personnel visited 10 Jails in different cities of Pakistan from 1st June, 2007 to 14th June, 2007, but they could not find any missing defence personnel of 1971 War.

As per laid instructions, a missing person is presumed to be killed if he is not found for 7 years and thereafter his family is given liberalized pensionary awards, which include liberalized family pension, gratuity and education allowance for children. Actions accordingly have been taken in case of missing defence persormel of 1971 War. The Government will continue to pursue the issue of missing defence personnel with the Government of Pakistan as it has been doing in the past.

Joint Naval exercise by India, US, Japan, Australia and Singapore

1724. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:
SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA:
MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a joint Naval exercise has been planned by India, US, Japan, Australia and Singapore in the Bay of Bengal in September, 2007; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof and its implication on India's foreign policy?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) A joint naval exercise by the Indian Navy, with the navies of USA, Australia, Singapore and Japan, is planned to be held in Bay of Bengal during September, 2007. The conduct of the joint exercise is in consonance with India's foreign policy.

Extension of BRO roads in Uttarakhand

†1725. SHRI HARlSH RAWAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of various steps to be taken for extension of network of Border Roads Organisation in the Indian territory alongwith China and Nepal of Uttarakhand; and

(b) the details of roads to be constructed by Border Roads Organisation in this area and by when the roads which are under construction will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRl A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Government have approved the proposal for construction of eight roads measuring 212.49 Km in length for extension of Border Roads network in Uttarakhand along China and Nepal border.

Border Roads Organisation have already commenced the construction work on two roads (16.35 Km) and work on six roads (196.14 Km) will be taken up on completion of land acquisition and necessary forest clearances. These roads are planned for completion in phased manner between 2009 and 2014 as detailed below:–

Number of roads and Length	Year of completion
One road (6.35 Km)	By 2009
One road (l0.00 Km)	By 2010
Four roads (113.54 Km)	By 2011
One road (50.00 Km)	By 2013
One road (32.60 Km)	By 2014

Defects in MBT Arjun

1726. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have detected some major defects in the Main Battle Tank 'Arjun' during the course of its field trial;

(b) if so, who are responsible to find out the defects during the last 40 years and what are the details of the defects found out;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.